DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 413 372 UD 031 960

TITLE	Asian Pacific Americans in Lowell. Community Profiles in Massachusetts.
INSTITUTION	Massachusetts Univ., Boston. Inst. for Asian American Studies.
SPONS AGENCY	Boston Foundation, MA.
PUB DATE	1995-00-00
NOTE	10p.
PUB TYPE	Numerical/Quantitative Data (110)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Asian Americans; *Demography; *Educational Attainment; Elementary Secondary Education; Employment Patterns; *Enrollment; Higher Education; Housing; Income; Limited English Speaking; *Pacific Americans; Tables (Data); Urban Areas; Urban Youth
IDENTIFIERS	*Massachusetts (Lowell)

ABSTRACT

The Community Profiles Project uses data from the 1990 U.S. Census to describe some of the population characteristics of Asian Pacific Americans in selected Massachusetts cities and towns. The profiles include basic statistics relating to income, employment, education, and housing. This information can assist policy makers and practitioners in developing programs and policies affecting Asian Pacific Americans that are appropriate, sensitive, and effective. This profile focuses on Lowell, where the 11,549 Asian Pacific Americans recorded in the 1990 Census as living in Lowell represented 11% of the city's population. Over half of the city's Asian Pacific Americans were Cambodian, and there were dramatic differences in the English proficiency of the Asian Pacific Americans, with older adults being much less proficient in English. The percentage of Asian Pacific Americans in the lowest income category in Lowell was nearly twice that of Whites, but, conversely, the percentage of Asian Pacific Americans in the highest income categories was the largest of any non-White group. The per capita income of Asian Pacific Americans in Lowell was less than one-half that of Whites, less than that of Blacks, and comparable to that of Hispanic Americans. Nearly 50% of all Asian Pacific Americans in Lowell were enrolled in school, the highest percentage of school enrollment of any racial and ethnic group. When those over 25 were considered, a higher percentage of Asian Pacific Americans than of the general population had less than a ninth-grade education. On the other hand, a considerably higher proportion of Asian Pacific Americans had secured graduate and professional degrees compared with all other groups and the total population. These findings reflect the considerable diversity of the city's Asian Pacific Americans. (Contains nine figures and eight tables.) (SLD)

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Asian Pacific Americans in Lowell.
Community Profiles in Massachusetts

Institute for Asian American Studies · UMass Boston

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COMMUNITY PROFILES IN MASSACHUSETTS

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS *in Lowell*

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The Community Profiles Project utilizes data drawn from the 1990 U.S. Census to describe some of the population characteristics of Asian Pacific Americans in selected Massachusetts cities and towns. The profiles include basic statistics relating to income, employment, education, and housing.This information can assist policymakers and practitioners in developing programs and constructing policies affecting Asian Pacific Americans that are appropriate, sensitive, and effective.

The Institute for Asian American Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston brings together resources and expertise from both the campus and community to conduct research on Asian Pacific American issues, to expand Asian American studies in the curriculum, and to support community development initiatives in Asian Pacific American communities in Massachusetts.

Project Staff: Project director: Paul Watanabe. Principal researchers: Carlton Sagara and Joanne Chow. Design and Production: Shauna Lo and Marilyn Wu

Support provided by: The

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I. Population Characteristics

Table 1. Population by Race*

White	84,029
Asian Pacific American	11,549
Other	5,431
Black	2,293
Native American	137
TOTAL	103,439

* Latinos may be of any race

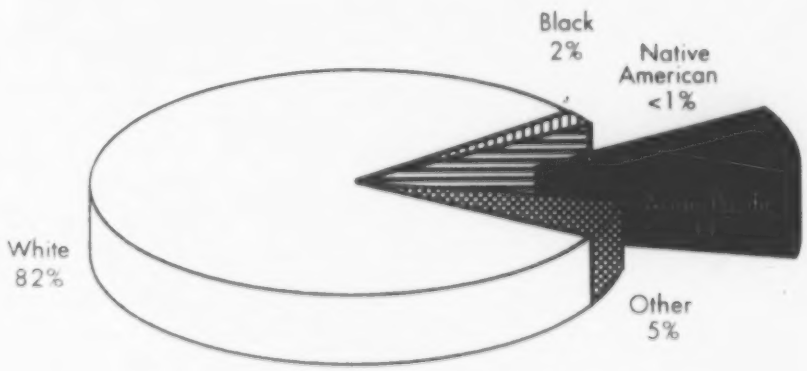


Figure 1

• The 11,549 Asian Pacific Americans recorded in the 1990 U.S. census as living in Lowell (Table 1) accounted for 11% of the city's residents (Figure 1). During the decade of the 1980s, the number of Asian Pacific Americans living in Lowell increased by nearly 450%

• Cambodians accounted for over one-half of the Asian Pacific American population (Table 2). Laotians, Asian Indians, Chinese, and Vietnamese were also well represented in Lowell.

• The Asian Pacific American population was almost equally divided between females and males overall and in virtually every age group (Figure 2).

• The Asian Pacific American population was relatively young with less than 20% older than 45 years of age (Figure 2).

• Dramatic differences were found in the English language proficiency of older and younger Asian Pacific Americans (Figure 3). Among those 65 years old and over, for example, 57% were not proficient in English. For individuals 5 to 17 years old, 27% were not proficient.

Table 2. Ancestry of Asian Pacific Americans

Cambodian	6,296	54.5%
Laotian	1,759	15.2%
Asian Indian	1,249	10.8%
Chinese	887	7.7%
Vietnamese	818	7.1%
Korean	215	1.9%
Other Asian	161	1.4%
Filipino	80	0.7%
Japanese	62	0.5%
Thai	22	0.2%
Guamanian	0	0.0%
Hawaiian	0	0.0%
Samoan	0	0.0%
Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
TOTAL	11,549	100.0%

Figure 2. Asian Pacific Americans by Sex and Age

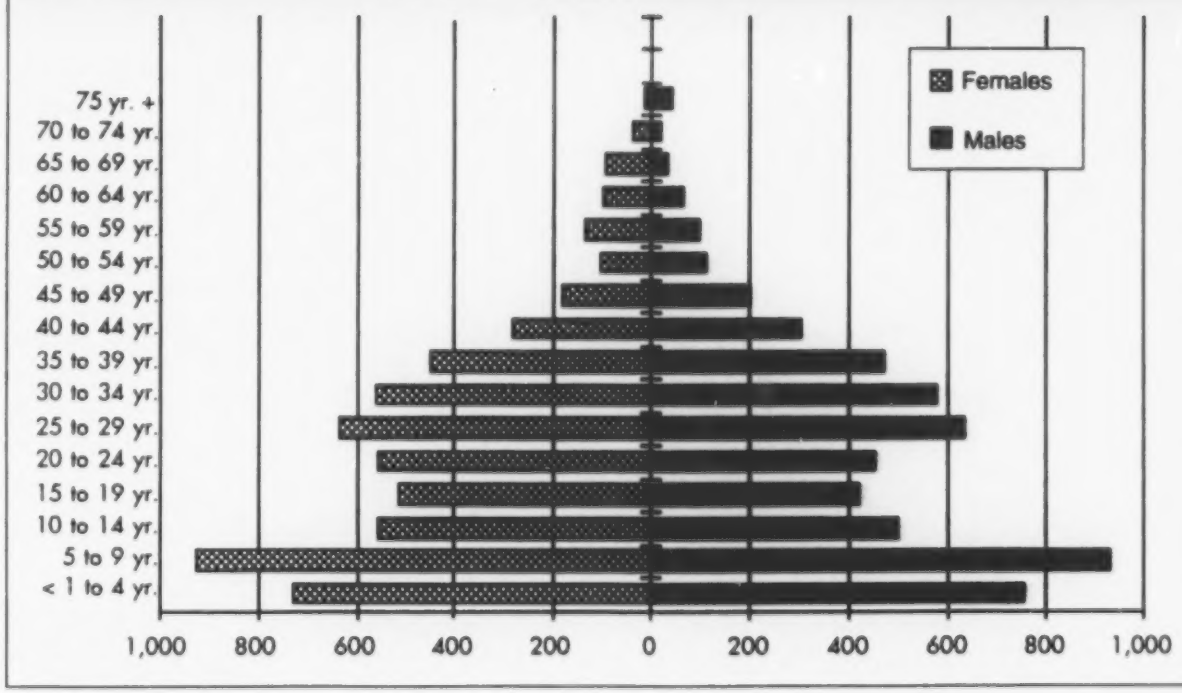
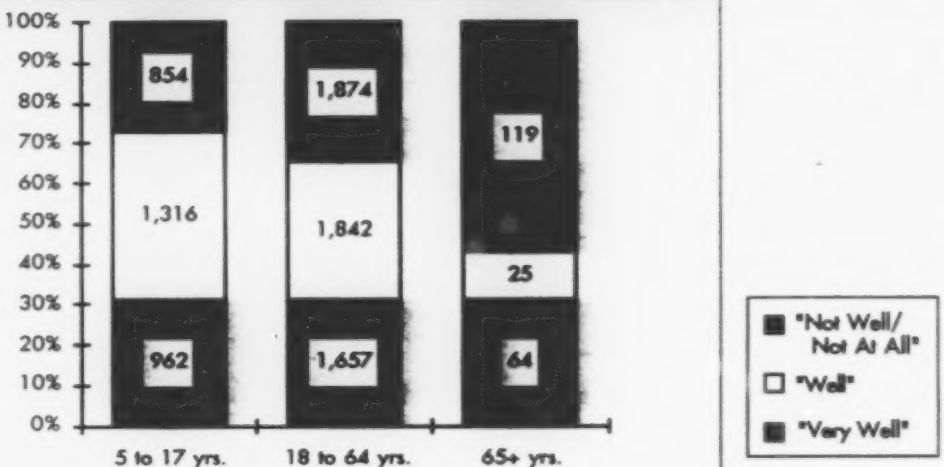


Figure 3. English Proficiency Among Asian Pacific Americans



II. Income

Table 3. Household Income by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am.	Other	Latino*	TOTAL
Less than $5,000	289	1,810	84	0	253	352	2,436
	11.2%	5.7%	10.6%	0.0%	15.5%	11.4%	6.6%
$5,000 to $9,999	347	4,016	114	25	496	864	4,998
	13.5%	12.6%	14.3%	41.0%	30.4%	28.1%	13.5%
$10,000 to $14,999	291	2,313	90	0	191	381	2,885
	11.3%	7.3%	11.3%	0.0%	11.7%	12.4%	7.8%
$15,000 to $24,999	397	4,659	177	9	359	610	5,601
	15.4%	14.6%	22.3%	14.8%	22.0%	19.8%	15.2%
$25,000 to $34,999	380	4,825	104	6	140	308	5,455
	14.8%	15.1%	13.1%	9.8%	8.6%	10.0%	14.8%
$35,000 to $49,999	349	6,503	104	5	82	282	7,043
	13.6%	20.4%	13.1%	8.2%	5.0%	9.2%	19.1%
$50,000 to $74,999	335	5,165	107	16	102	240	5,725
	13.0%	16.2%	13.5%	26.2%	6.2%	7.8%	15.5%
$75,000 to $99,999	130	1,764	0	0	10	19	1,904
	5.1%	5.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.6%	5.2%
$100,000 or more	54	814	15	0	0	22	883
	2.1%	2.6%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	2.4%
TOTAL	2,572	31,869	795	61	1,633	3,078	36,930
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

* Latinos may be of any race

• Household incomes of Asian Pacific Americans reflected some wide disparities (Table 3). For example, the percentage of Asian Pacific Americans in the lowest income category (those making less than $5,000) was nearly twice that of whites. On the other hand, the percentage of Asian Pacific Americans in the highest category (those making over $100,000), was the largest by a small margin of any non-white group, although trailing the percentage for whites.

• The distribution of Asian Pacific American household incomes compared with the total population was considerably larger in the lower income categories (less than $25,000) and smaller in the higher categories (above $35,000) (Figure 4).

• The per capita income of Asian Pacific Americans was less than one-half that of whites (Figure 5). It also was less than that of Blacks and Native Americans and was comparable to that of Latinos.

• A much larger portion of Asian Pacific Americans in poverty was less than 18 years old compared with whites

Figure 4. Household Income for Asian Pacific Am. and Total Population

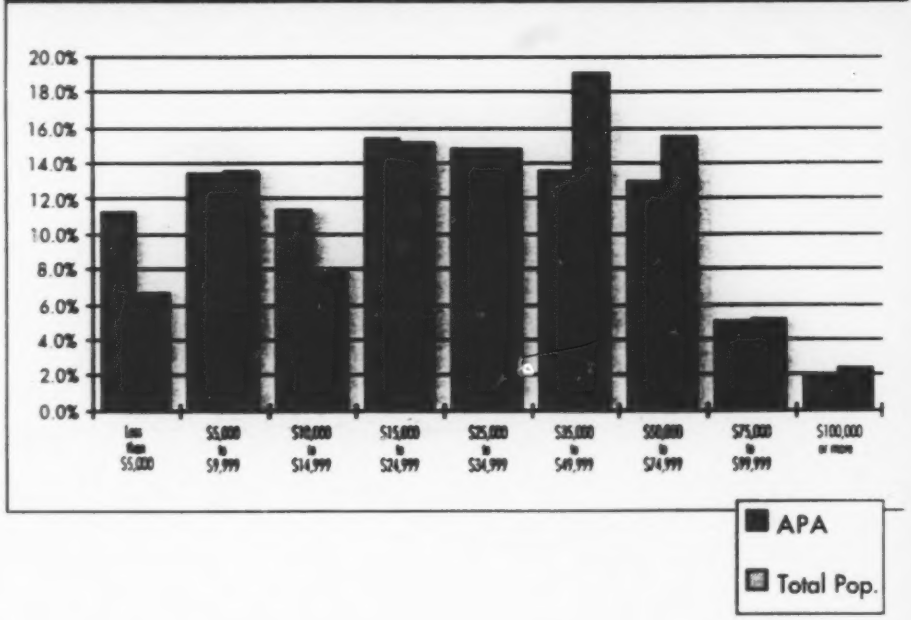


Figure 5. Per Capita Income by Race and Ethnicity

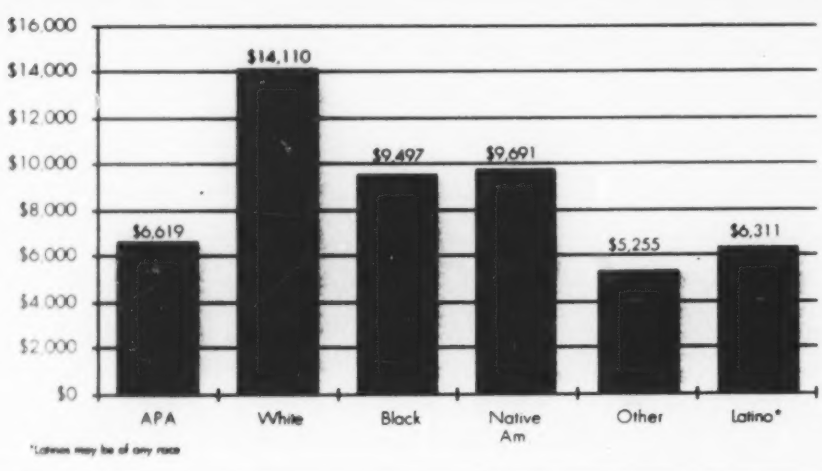


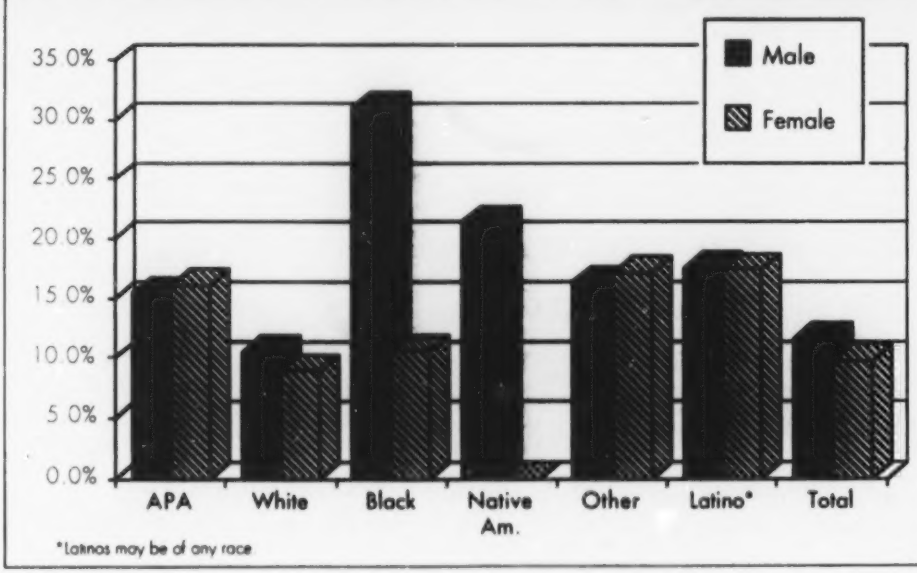
Table 4. Poverty Status by Age by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am.	Other	Latino*	TOTAL
Under 5 years	749	1,370	119	0	543	912	2,781
	16.0%	14.2%	18.3%	0.0%	18.8%	20.0%	15.5%
5 years	213	274	35	0	96	156	618
	4.6%	2.8%	5.4%	0.0%	3.3%	3.4%	3.5%
6 to 11 years	1,025	987	124	0	549	886	2,685
	22.0%	10.2%	19.1%	0.0%	19.0%	19.4%	15.0%
12 to 17 years	498	772	30	0	478	760	1,778
	10.7%	8.0%	4.6%	0.0%	16.5%	16.7%	9.9%
18 to 64 years	2,065	4,830	341	38	1,200	1,821	8,474
	44.2%	50.0%	52.5%	100.0%	41.5%	39.9%	47.3%
65 to 74 years	95	622	0	0	14	14	731
	2.0%	6.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%	4.1%
75 years and over	22	798	0	0	13	13	833
	0.5%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%	4.7%
TOTAL	4,667	9,653	649	38	2,893	4,562	17,900
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Latinos may be of any race

III. Employment

Figure 6. Unemployment Rate By Sex, Race and Ethnicity



*Latinos may be of any race

(Table 4). Asian Pacific Americans over 65 years old, in contrast, constituted a much smaller percentage of those in poverty compared with whites (Table 4).

- Asian Pacific American male and female unemployment rates were greater than those for whites and the total population (Figure 6).
- Asian Pacific Americans had lower labor force participation rates than whites, Blacks, Latinos, and the total population (Table 5).

Table 5. Labor Force Attachment for Persons 16 Years and Older by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am.	Other	Latino*	TOTAL
Males	3,371	32,068	876	61	1,519	2,982	37,895
In Armed Forces	0	121	0	0	9	9	130
Civilian: Employed	1,936	21,501	438	33	928	1,806	24,836
Civilian: Unemployed	353	2,510	197	9	181	382	3,250
Not in labor force	1,082	7,936	241	19	401	785	9,679
Male Unempl. Rate*	15.4%	10.5%	31.0%	21.4%	16.3%	17.5%	11.6%
Participation Rate@	67.9%	75.2%	72.5%	68.9%	73.4%	73.6%	74.4%
Females	3,565	34,997	754	34	1,654	3,156	41,004
In Armed Forces	0	24	0	0	0	0	24
Civilian: Employed	1,285	18,721	475	13	582	1,293	21,076
Civilian: Unemployed	246	1,835	56	0	120	273	2,257
Not in labor force	2,034	14,417	223	21	952	1,590	17,647
Female Unempl. Rate*	16.1%	8.9%	10.5%	0.0%	17.1%	17.4%	9.7%
Participation Rate@	42.9%	58.8%	70.4%	38.2%	42.4%	49.6%	56.9%

* Unempl. Rate = (Civilian Unempl.)/(Civilian Empl. + Civilian Unempl.)
@ Participatin Rate=(Civilian Employed+Civilian Unempl.)/(Civilian Empl.+Civilian Unempl.+Not in Labor Force)

*Latinos may be of any race.

IV. Education

Table 6. School Enrollment of Persons 3 Years and Older by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am.	Other	Latino*	TOTAL
In Preprimary School	138	1,334	70	0	115	198	1,657
	1.3%	1.7%	3.3%	0.0%	2.3%	2.2%	1.7%
Elem. or High School	3,535	11,661	461	23	1,551	2,769	17,231
	33.1%	14.5%	21.6%	18.4%	31.5%	30.1%	17.6%
Enrolled in College	1,371	8,118	314	13	255	523	10,071
	12.8%	10.1%	14.7%	10.4%	5.2%	5.7%	10.3%
Not Enrolled in School	5,630	59,041	1,292	89	3,004	5,702	69,056
	52.7%	73.7%	60.5%	71.2%	61.0%	62.0%	70.5%
TOTAL	10,674	80,154	2,137	125	4,925	9,192	98,015
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Latinos may be of any race

Figure 7. Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older for Asian Pacific Americans and Total Population

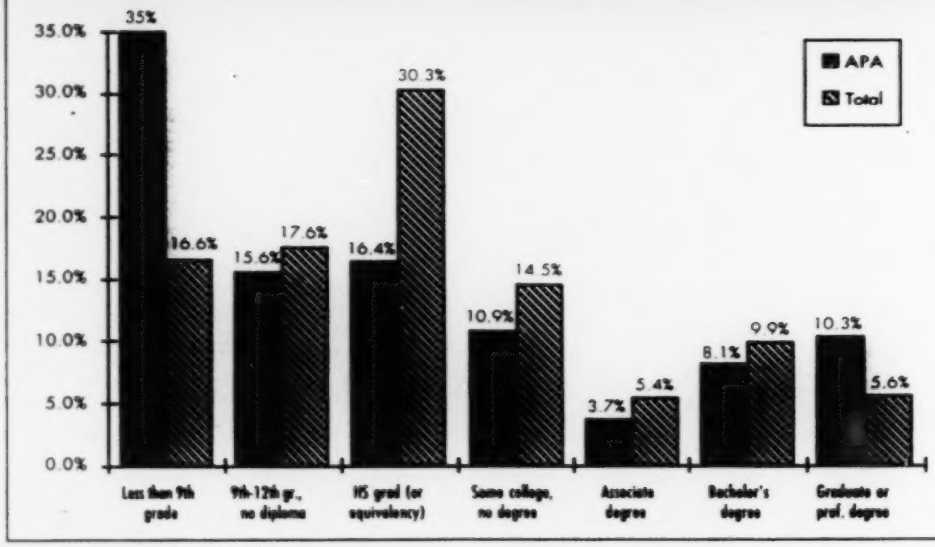


Table 7. Educational Attainment of Persons 25 Years and Older by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am.	Other	Latino*	TOTAL
Less than 9th grade	1,808	7,644	115	33	648	1,339	10,248
	35.0%	14.4%	9.4%	40.2%	30.0%	31.2%	16.6%
9th-12th gr., no diploma	807	9,133	262	6	665	1,213	10,873
	15.6%	17.2%	21.4%	7.3%	30.8%	28.3%	17.6%
HS grad (or equivalency)	848	17,130	275	19	448	887	18,720
	16.4%	32.3%	22.4%	23.2%	20.8%	20.7%	30.3%
Some college, no degree	561	7,903	230	6	272	453	8,972
	10.9%	14.9%	18.8%	7.3%	12.6%	10.6%	14.5%
Associate degree	192	2,966	113	6	70	175	3,347
	3.7%	5.6%	9.2%	7.3%	3.2%	4.1%	5.4%
Bachelor's degree	420	5,449	171	5	47	174	6,092
	8.1%	10.3%	13.9%	6.1%	2.2%	4.1%	9.9%
Graduate or prof. degree	534	2,874	60	7	9	47	3,484
	10.3%	5.4%	4.9%	8.5%	0.4%	1.1%	5.6%
TOTAL	5,170	53,099	1,226	82	2,159	4,288	61,736
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Latinos may be of any race

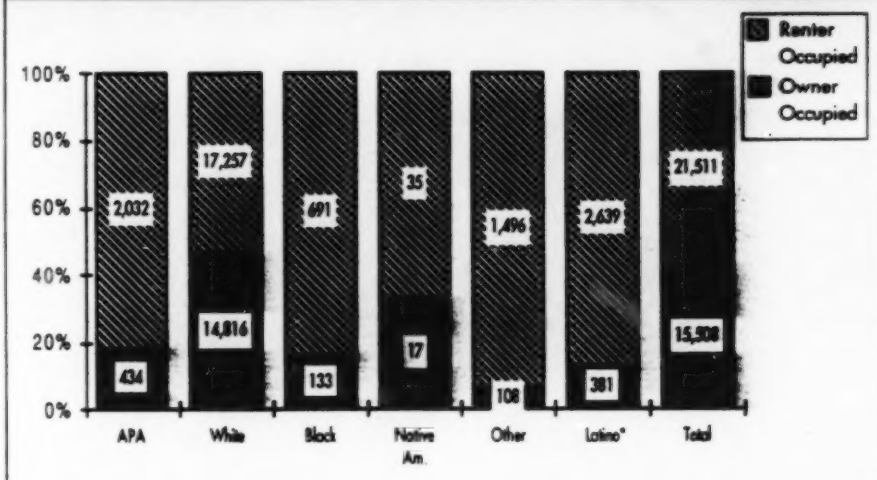
- Nearly 50% of all Asian Pacific Americans were enrolled in school (Table 6). This was the highest percentage of school enrollment of any racial and ethnic group.
- The educational attainments of Asian Pacific Americans over 25 years old departed from those of the total population at several levels (Table 7 and Figure 7). For example, a considerably higher percentage of Asian Pacific Americans had less than a 9th grade education. On the other hand, a significantly higher proportion of Asian Pacific Americans had secured graduate or professional degrees compared with all other groups and the total population.

V. Housing

• The owner-occupancy rate for Asian Pacific Americans like those of other non-whites trailed rates for whites and the total population by a considerable margin (Figure 8).

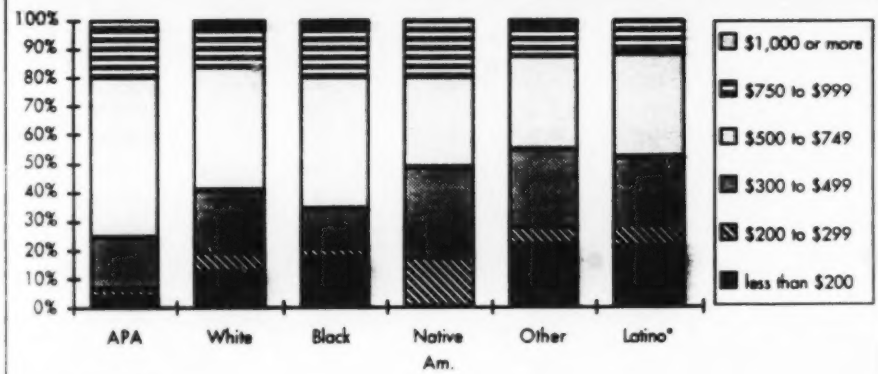
• The proportion of Asian Pacific Americans who paid rents over $500 was the highest of any group (Figure 9).

Figure 8. Rental and Owner Occupancy By Race and Ethnicity



*Latinos may be of any race

Figure 9. Gross Rent By Race and Ethnicity



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LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA

The 1990 U.S. Census data allow for the examination of the situation of Asian Pacific Americans and provide the most comprehensive available information on this group. The data, however, does have some limitations. Linguistic, cultural, and other barriers contributed to an undercounting of Asian Pacific Americans in the 1990 Census. Furthermore, by aggregating Asian Pacific Americans together, differences between nationalities were often muted. Errors in coding also limited the reliability of some data on Asian Pacific Americans.

Table 8. Gross Rent by Race and Ethnicity

	APA	White	Black	Nat. Am.	Other	Latino*
less than $200	80	2,095	118	0	311	533
$200 to $299	56	1,184	25	6	101	201
$300 to $499	359	3,582	95	11	389	605
$500 to $749	1,132	7,262	314	11	472	921
$750 to $999	351	2,339	129	7	167	288
$1,000 or more	54	362	10	0	22	29
No cash rent	0	375	0	0	20	30

*Latinos may be of any race